

Editorial

Keep OB Unit At St. Mary's

Judging from the mail, this newspaper has been receiving there is strong sentiment for keeping the obstetrical unit operating at St. Mary's Hospital. As well there should be.

Strong sentiment without sound follow-through, however, is useless. Those who feel that the St. Mary's OB unit is a necessary part of the community should attend the public hearings set up to resolve the question. Some already have taken place; the following remain:

Gates-Chili High School, 910 Wegman Road, Gates on Thursday, March 6 from 7:30-9:30 p.m.; Henrietta Town Hall, 475 Calkins Road, Henrietta, on Tuesday, March 11 from 7:30-9:30 p.m.; ABC Center #2, 700 North St., Rochester on Thursday, March 13 from 7:30-9:30; and Jefferson High School, Edgerton Park, Rochester on Monday, March 17 from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

St. Mary's spokesmen admit the hospital is endangered by the consolidation of OB units seen necessary by the Genesee Region Health Planning Council. That is unfortunate, because the hospital wages the good fight. It does not perform abortions or sterilizations and because it does not do the latter it loses statistically in the number of births performed and that is one factor in consideration of whose OB units will go. Many women opt for sterilization directly after birth, a hospital spokesman says, and if the hospital does not perform such a procedure they have their babies elsewhere.

St. Mary's was Rochester's first hospital. It is its only Catholic hospital. It is the only hospital in the inner city. It is a fine hospital in every way. It is especially comforting to those who do not believe in abortions or sterilizations.

We have printed on this page some of the letters we have received on the matter. Read them. If you agree that closing St. Mary's OB unit is wrong, then say so. Publicly.

Never Wrong?

Papal infallibility has been in the news these days what with the Vatican censure of Father Hans Kueng. But we like the way Father Robert Drinan used the term to describe the efforts of Newsweek magazine to avoid printing a retraction of a story about the Jesuit congressman.

According to Father Drinan, when Newsweek in its Jan. 27 issue said that Drinan, Father Daniel Berrigan and Father John McLaughlin "skirted the letter of Jesuit law" it was in error. He says that when he contacted the magazine, he was told that it was its policy "never to confess error" although it would allow a letter to the editor about it.

Father Drinan feels that he has found a new source of "infallibility in the world."

If all that Father Drinan says is true we wonder if Newsweek considers itself incapable of error on all occasions or only when it speaks about matters of faith and morals, such as Jesuit involvement in public affairs.

On the Ball

Although they may be regarded as strange by some a group of professional athletes make sense when they talk.

They are the 90 pro football and baseball players who attended a Christian training conference in Dallas, Texas, recently.

"The winning aspect of pro football is no longer my god. I know if we win or lose it's for the glory of God." Want to disagree? Tell John Niland the all-pro offensive lineman of the National Football League's Dallas Cowboys.

And another rugged performer, Jeff Siemon of the Minnesota Vikings owns up that he never prays for victory. "I always pray that whatever the outcome, it will be used for God's glory."

Too fundamental? Then listen to Calvin Jones of the Denver Broncos.

"You become aware that there's more to life than people yelling in the stands... deep down inside you still have an emptiness. And Christ can fill that void."

Many of us might be uncomfortable saying such things publicly and tend to feel skittish at others doing so, especially those paid to entertain us. Yet they make sense. As pitcher Dave Roberts of the Houston Astros, puts it, at civic groups and schools "we probably have a more dramatic impact than ministers."

Readers Back St. Mary's Unit

Editor:

As a nurse educator, I strongly support St. Mary's position against closing any obstetrical unit in the Rochester area. Maternity nursing is a basic course in all programs preparing nurses for practice. At present, all of us in education are having some difficulty obtaining adequate clinical experience in maternity nursing. One less obstetrical unit in the area would seriously alter the quality of existing educational programs.

Let I be accused of having a self-serving motive for supporting St. Mary's position, I wish to stress some of the other issues:

*an agency responsible for delivering about 1200 infants annually is providing an important service to the community.

*what effect on the quality of care would be the outcome if existing agencies assumed the responsibility for this number of additional deliveries?

*in these inflationary times can we possibly ignore the cost factor?

*the national trend to bring the delivery of all health care closer geographically to the consumer would be grossly affected by the closing of the only obstetrical unit on the west side of Rochester.

Please consider all of these factors when discussing the closing of any obstetrical unit in Rochester.

Virginia T. Shea, chairperson
Nursing Department
Monroe Community Hospital

Community Necessity

Editor:

We are writing to let you know that we are hoping that you will do whatever you can to help in keeping St. Mary's obstetrics department open. We feel that it would be a great loss to our community if this facility were to close.

Our own six children were born there. The care was excellent and we would like to see that same kind of care available to others in the years to come. We feel that St. Mary's has advantages that cannot to be duplicated elsewhere.

Joseph and Ann DeFazio
3080 Clover St.
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Vol. 89 No. 44 March 5, 1975

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 15¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$6.00; Canada and Foreign, \$10.00. Offices: Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604; (716) 454-7050. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier-Journal 1

Inner City Service

Editor:

We're opposed to the closing of the obstetrical unit at St. Mary's Hospital. They are doing a good job of serving the inner city people and should be allowed to continue their fine work.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Pompei
and family
276 Dartmouth St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Superb Start Commended

Editor:

I am writing in regard to the Genesee Region Health Planning Council's decision to close one or more obstetrical units in Monroe County. I sincerely hope that St. Mary's will not be one of the units that will be closed.

As a former patient in obstetrics and the gynecology units I can honestly say there is present at St. Mary's from the doctors, nurses and the entire staff a genuine feeling of compassion and understanding.

The start that mothers and babies receive at St. Mary's is superb. I sincerely hope all efforts will be made to keep these units open at this fine hospital.

Mrs. Peter Saraceno
171 Fairgate St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14606

maternity among the five Rochester area hospitals offering maternity services. Closing St. Mary's would mean that obstetrical patients would have to pay considerably more for care at certain other hospitals in the community.

A survey of obstetrical patients who delivered at St. Mary's during the past two years shows that 64 percent live in the inner city neighborhoods immediately surrounding the hospital and that about 10 per cent are clinic patients. The Board of Directors of the Genesee Region Health Planning Council will be forcing the innercity residents to utilize the hospitals in the outlying areas. St. Mary's is the only hospital offering obstetrical services in the western quadrant of Monroe County. Poor weather, heavy traffic, and bridge closings can prevent patients from Gates, Chili, Greece, and western sections of the county from reaching other Rochester hospitals in time.

St. Mary's is the only hospital between Syracuse and Buffalo that offers the alternative of a religious sponsored obstetrical unit to patients, and the right to give birth in a hospital that does not perform elective abortions. If St. Mary's obstetrical department were to close it would mean that citizens would no longer have the right to an alternative of a religious sponsored obstetrical unit.

It should be noted that the Medical Society of Monroe County has disagreed with the recommendations of the council. Based on the information currently available, we do not believe that the closing of any obstetrical unit in Rochester can be justified.

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Rochester 14626

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52 Newton Road
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More Letters On Page 5

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

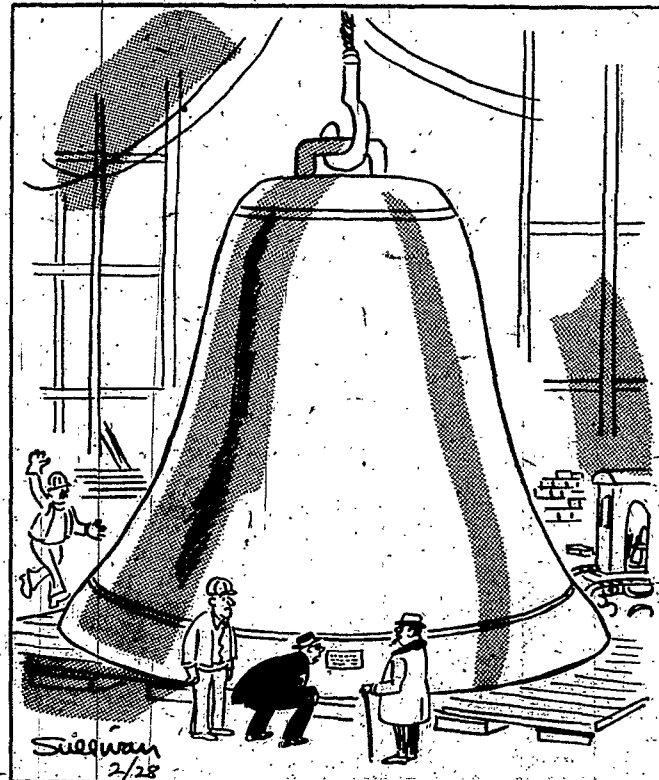
They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

No OB Unit Should Close

Editor:

The Board of Directors of the Genesee Region Health Planning Council has recommended the closing of one or more obstetrical units in Monroe County by April, 1975, and has delegated to a committee of the Council the responsibility for determining which units should close. One of the units under consideration by the Council to be closed is St. Mary's Hospital.

In these days of inflation and recession it doesn't seem logical to remove an item of savings from the consumer. St. Mary's has the lowest per diem rate for



"GOLLY, I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED, MR. OSGOOD, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, IT DOES SAY 'DONATED BY THURMAN OSGOOD III' - AND IN PARENTHESES - 'PARISH DING-A-LING'!"